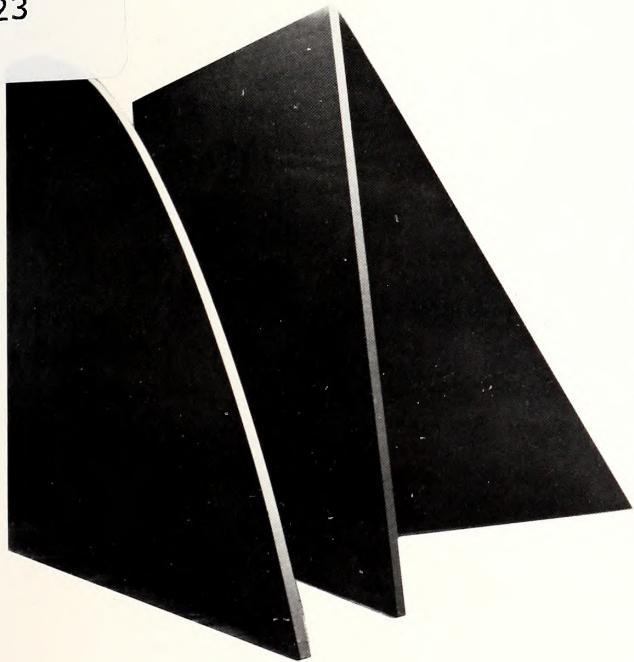


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ROBERT MAKI: SCULPTURE PROJECTS

An exhibition supported in part by the Wake Forest University, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, North Carolina School of the Arts ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM.

OCTOBER 28–DECEMBER 17, 1978

SOUTHEASTERN CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

This project is made possible by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Foreword

This exhibition of the work of Robert Maki marks the beginning of a unique Artist-in-Residence program linking three institutions: the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Wake Forest University and the North Carolina School of the Arts. This concept has been designed to bring to Winston-Salem artists of exceptional talent of national and regional prominence. Each of the three institutions will share, over the next three years, two artists per year for 12 week periods each. Additionally, each institution will have special visiting artists during each year for specific programs unique to their needs. We estimate that the three year program will bring over 50 artists to this community to share their special talent with students, children and the community at large.

The exhibition of Robert Maki is the entry point that introduces the artist to the community and begins his residency. This will define the artist's work prior to this involvement with the students of Wake Forest and the North Carolina School of the Arts. This program has been funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, and we are indebted to the leadership and guidance of Howard Klein, Director of the Rockefeller Foundation's Arts Division.

Ted Potter
Director

Introduction

The occasion of this exhibition marks Robert Maki's ninth residency as a guest artist. Those other tenures (lasting from three days to ten weeks) offered hundreds of students an opportunity to come into contact with not only one of America's more significant younger sculptors, but one of its most articulate. The cooperative participation in the full scale construction of a wooden mock-up also provides an unparalleled chance to witness his utterly thorough and unparallel working method.

For with Maki, nothing is haphazard. Rejecting the aleatoric or "chance" spirit of the sculptures assembled by 1960s' happening artists, Kaprow, Oldenburg, etc., as well as the preceding generations of sculptors like David Smith, (those painterly, scratched surfaces), Seymour Lipton or Reuben Nakian (those pseudo-organic bronze shapes), Maki's earliest work, his laminated wood constructions moved in an entirely different direction.

Two things made the wood constructions a logical move. First, the material was one with which he was fully comfortable. There is always plenty of wood lying around the Pacific Northwest and, after all, his training was initially in industrial arts. Secondly, the visual source for these pieces, and for all of his art to follow, was geometry. His ability to see line, space, form, even color, through an abundant geometric vocabulary decided his content. It is the execution of this aim which comprises, in part, his accomplishment.

Dismissing the overweening mass of Gabriel Kohn's work, whom Maki met in 1965, Maki decided instead to imply mass. As a result, *Prolix I*, 1966-67, looks like the outline of a nine-foot long, four-foot high rectangle which hiccoughs unexpectedly in the lower righthand corner. With no

pedestals to contain them, something that kept traditional sculpture under control, and no concession to a strictly regular shape, these constructions stand still and shoot out into space at the same time. Similarly, *Untitled* has crawled down off the pedestal, too, combining a flat wooden square with a single six foot extension creeping along the floor and stopping abruptly. What we must include in our approach to such art is the air space directly above it as well as the area the sculptures occupy on the floor. In Maki's case, the sculpture "holder" or container instead of a pedestal became the room itself and this recognition was the beginning of his growing mastery of site and volume. The wood constructions lead us into thinking about our own physical relationship to the object in addition to the entire space surrounding us. It is in this way that Maki's early work, a very important part of his art, goes beyond that traditionally satisfying part of sculpture — use of materials.

What followed in the ensuing ten years was a pendant of unusually distinguished sculptures, some temporary, some permanent, which offered Maki, and those who see them, a chance to examine more closely that broad area one might call visual phenomena. Each Maki sculpture presents for viewer's contemplation a different question about how we see and experience three-dimensional objects.

After the hemlock and fir period, Maki spent months in his Etruria Street studio in Seattle making a series of small geometric cardboard cutouts. Although his sketches are themselves of considerable beauty (*Western Washington State College Proposal*, 1969) the cutouts came to be and continue as the sculptor's primary mode for planning a piece: altering them here, clipping off a corner there, taking

them outdoors to see how they react to sunlight; in short, to predict all the possible perceptual variations. By imagining all four views of an object simultaneously (front, side, rear, top) as Maki can, because of his mechanical drawing background, one achieves the freedom to isolate and exploit different views easily.

Out of these studies came Object #1 and Object #1A which introduced a subtly undulating curve for the edges of two right triangles joined along one edge. These created an enclosing fold, to appear over and over again, that would both contain and reflect light. Seen in bright sunlight, the enclosed areas set up ambiguous zones and the waterfall shape of the edges simultaneously led up into the air and down into the ground. Maki created an illusion of the object self-destructing into space. That quality, which he described as "half way between sound and silence", is an important part of the strength all his work conveys.

The second-generation Finnish-American sculptor began to hit his stride in 1972 when he was awarded the major commission at the newly remodeled Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. With some of the large 11-1/2 foot aluminum panels parallel and some slanting in against one another, Central Plaza Sculpture offers Maki's most dramatic expression of the enclosed space. A highly significant piece of American sculpture, its witty configuration of planes stands solidly but appears to be collapsing in upon one itself at the same time. Tension and ease, strength and near-collapse, geometric shapes converging into one another, and a total complexity continually resolving into Euclidean simplicity, are the components producing the piece's resonant and pleasing ambiguity.

Maki's E Series (1973-75) is an investigation of implied geometric structure. In these large scale works, the enclosing fold suggests real shelter space. The middle cross-bar of the E appears, disappears, slants down, gets shoved to the side or sent at a downward angle, depending on formal constraints and Maki's esthetic considerations of the site. Varying in length from thirteen, E Fold, to 48 feet, E Closed, some of the E Series also incorporate the earlier "wave" motif. The works change shape, seemingly, now appearing to be a triangle, now a parallelogram, Trapezoid E. The richness and variety of Maki's sculpture always rests on these subtle and unending perceptual revelations the pieces offer. Trapezoid E will be the subject of a chapter in Donald W. Thalacker's forthcoming *The Place of Art in the World of Architecture*.

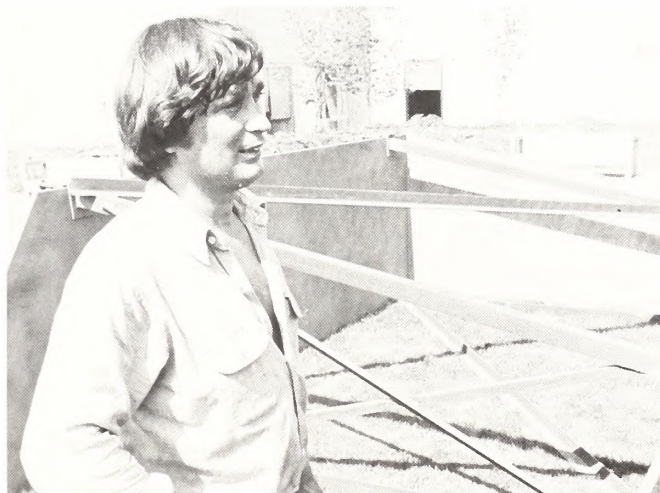
Since then, Maki has been awarded commissions for Trimet, Portland, Oregon Transit Mall, a simple combination of three eight foot high panels in a Z-shape; Trapezoid Square, four upright and sloped cor-ten steel planes forming a 15' x 16' square; and Cut, another cor-ten piece, which removed one side of a square and opens onto a spectacular view of the Cascade Mountains on Seattle's eastern horizon.

Robert Maki's contribution to American art continues to be his interest in examining through his sculpture the many ways we see. By manipulating our perceptions, he has manifested his own quiet determined faith in the ability of forms to speak for themselves.

Mathew Kangas
East Pike Street
Seattle
September, 1978

Solo Exhibitions

New Dimensions in Music, Seattle 1967
Attica Gallery, Seattle 1967
Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California 1967
Richard White Gallery, Seattle 1969
Michael Walls Gallery, San Francisco 1969
Portland Art Museum School, Portland, Oregon 1970
Western Art Gallery, Western Washington State College,
Bellingham, Washington 1970
Seattle Pacific University, Seattle 1971
Modern Art Pavilion, Seattle 1973
Montana State University, Bozeman 1973
Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, Oregon 1974
Humboldt State University, Arcata, California 1974
Reed College, Portland, Oregon 1975
Dootson/Calderhead Gallery, Seattle 1976
Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington 1977



Biography

Born in Walla Walla, Washington in 1938
B.A. degree from Western Washington State College, 1962
M.F.A. degree from University of Washington, 1966
Taught at the University of Washington, 1966-68
Recipient of a National Endowment for
the Arts Fellowship, 1968
Living in Seattle, Washington

Group Exhibitions

Gordon Woodside Gallery, Seattle 1965
NORTHWEST WATERCOLOR EXHIBITION, Seattle Art Museum,
Seattle 1965
51ST ANNUAL OF NORTHWEST ARTISTS, Modern Art Pavilion,
Seattle 1965
AMERICAN DRAWINGS, Erie Art Center, Mercyhurst College,
Erie, Pennsylvania 1966
THE WEATHERSPOON ANNUAL, University of North Carolina,
Greensboro 1966
SCULPTURE NW 67, Modern Art Pavilion, Seattle 1967
X30 NORTHWEST PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS, Central
Washington State College, Ellensburg, Washington 1967
SUMMER INVITATIONAL, Henry Gallery, University of
Washington, Seattle 1967
Michael Walls Gallery, San Francisco 1967
Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles 1967
Sally Judd Gallery, Portland, Oregon 1968
SELECTIONS FROM SALLY JUDD GALLERY, University of
Oregon, Eugene 1968
WEST COAST NOW, Portland Art Museum, Los Angeles
Municipal Museum, Seattle Art Museum, and DeYoung
Museum in San Francisco 1968
2ND NATIONAL INVITATIONAL EXHIBITION, Doane College,
Crete, Nebraska 1969
GOVERNOR'S INVITATIONAL, Olympia, Washington 1969

INVITATIONAL DRAWING SHOW, California State College,
Hayward 1969
INVITATIONAL DRAWING SHOW, Chico State College,
California 1969
USES OF STRUCTURE, Michael Walls Gallery,
San Francisco 1970
WEST COAST DRAWING INVITATIONAL, St. Cloud State
College, Minnesota 1971
CONTACT NORTHWEST 1971, Seattle 1971
ART IN PUBLIC PLACES, Henry Gallery, University of
Washington, Seattle 1971
OUTDOOR SCULPTURE INVITATIONAL, Seattle 1973
ART OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, National Collection of
Fine Arts, Washington, D.C., Portland Art Museum, and
Seattle Art Museum 1974
WORKING DRAWINGS BY SCULPTORS, Kansas State College,
Pittsburg 1975
NORTHWEST SCULPTURE, Museum of Art, Washington State
University, Pullman 1975
NORTHWEST ARTISTS TODAY: PART II, Modern Art Pavilion,
Seattle 1976
SUMMER EXHIBITION, University of Wisconsin, Stout 1976
FINE ARTS IN NEW FEDERAL BUILDINGS, New Orleans
Museum of Art 1976

GROUP INVITATIONAL, Wake Forest University,
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 1977
MASTERWORKS IN WOOD — NORTHWEST ARTISTS, Portland
Art Museum, Oregon 1977
NORTHWEST '77, Modern Art Pavilion, Seattle 1977
19 ARTISTS: WORKS ON PAPER, Traver Gallery, Seattle 1978
FIRST WESTERN STATES INVITATIONAL BIENNIAL EXHIBITION,
National Collection of Fine Arts, San Francisco Museum
of Modern Art, Seattle Art Museum, and Denver Art
Museum 1979.
ILLUSIONS, University of Southern California, Los Angeles 1979.

Sculpture Installations and Commissions

WALL SCULPTURE, Art Building, Stanford University, Stanford,
California 1969
WALL SCULPTURE, State Highway Administration Building,
Olympia, Washington 1970
PARKWAY, University of Washington, Seattle 1971
HIGHLINE, Highline Community College, Burien,
Washington 1971
CENTRAL PLAZA SCULPTURE, Seattle-Tacoma International
Airport 1971-73

WALL SCULPTURE, Mr. and Mrs. Omer Schroeder, Pompano
Beach, Florida 1972
MONTANA E, Montana State University, Bozeman 1973
E69, Seattle Center, Washington 1973
BLACK SQUARE, Seattle Pacific University 1974
E SQUARE (WIPPICH), St. Cloud State College,
Minnesota 1974
E CLOSED, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California 1974
CENTER, Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon 1974
TRIANGLE, Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon 1974
E FOLD, Portland Art Museum School, Oregon 1974
WALL SCULPTURE, Seattle City Light, Seattle 1974
TRAPEZOID E, Federal Office Building, Eugene, Oregon 1975
TRAPEZOID SQUARE, Evergreen State College, Olympia,
Washington 1976
TRIMET, Portland, Oregon 1977
CUT, University of Washington, Seattle 1978
WINSTON-SALEM PROJECT, Winston-Salem, North Carolina,
1978-79
Outdoor Sculpture Commission, Capitol Campus, Salem,
Oregon 1979

Selected Bibliography

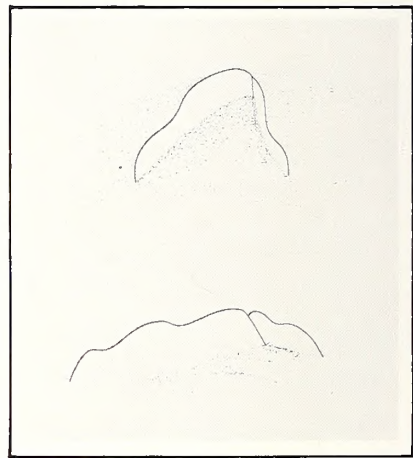
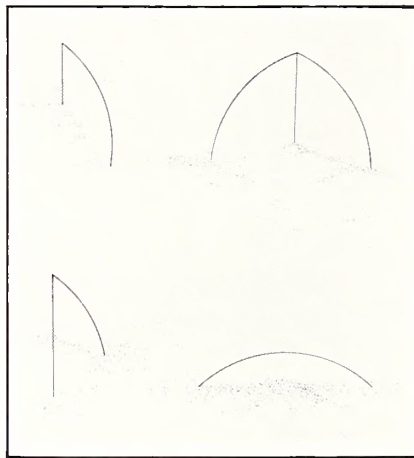
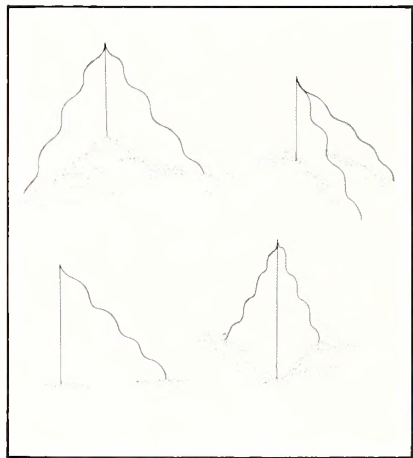
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- Robbins, Tom. "A Plague Upon the Land," Northwest Art
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- Steeffel, Lawrence, Jr. "Robert Maki — Constructions 1966-67," Richmond, California. Richmond Art Center, 1967.
- Sutinen, Paul. "Maki Paintings Are Worth Finding," Willamette Week, February, 1975. Illustrated.
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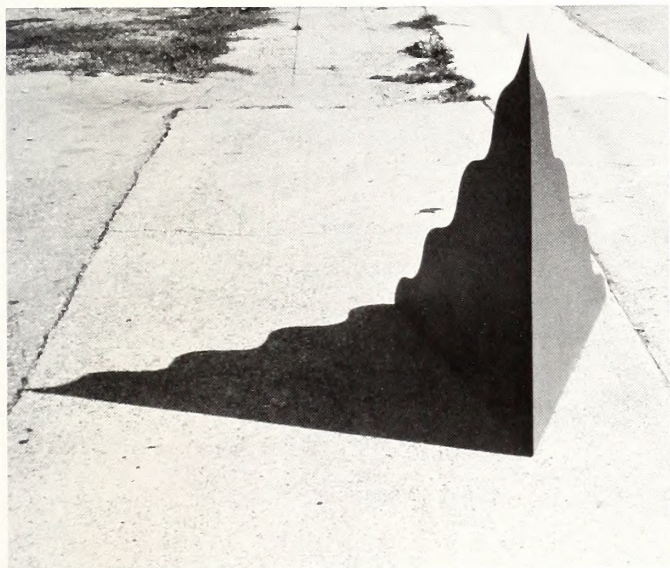
Catalogue of the Exhibition

Works represented by models:

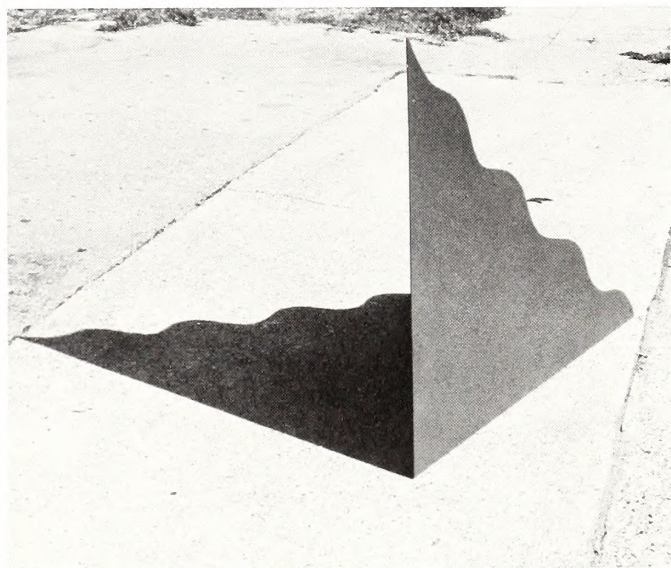
1. **OBJECT 1A**, Polished Aluminum
2. **E 69**, Gray Masonite
3. **PARKWAY**, Red Oxide Cardboard
4. **CENTRAL PLAZA**, Gray Masonite
5. **MONTANA E**, White Paper
6. **TRIANGLE**, Black Cardboard
7. **CENTER**, Black Cardboard
8. **E SQUARE (WIPPICH)**, Oxidized Gray Steel
9. **E CLOSED**, Blued Steel
10. **TRAPEZOID SQUARE**, Gray and Natural Cardboard
11. **TRAPEZOID E**, Black Masonite
12. **BLACK SQUARE**, Black Aluminum
13. **TRIMET**, Red Oxide Aluminum
14. **CUT**, Masonite for Oxide Steel

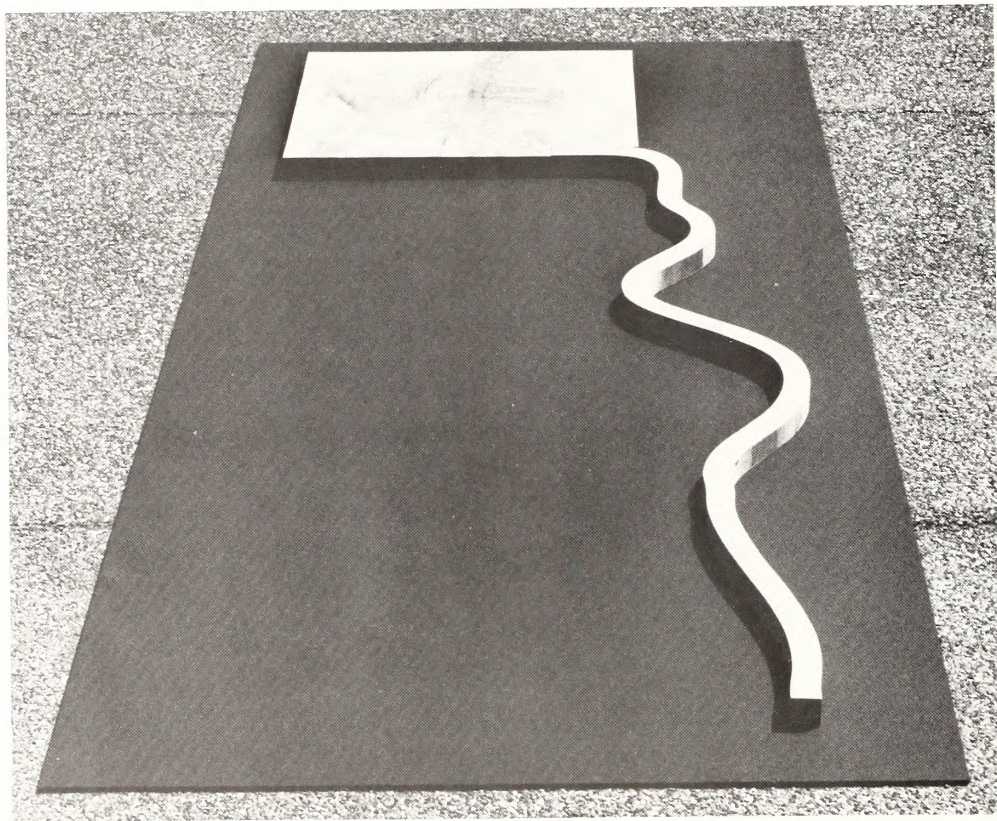
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Ink on Paper, 11"x14"



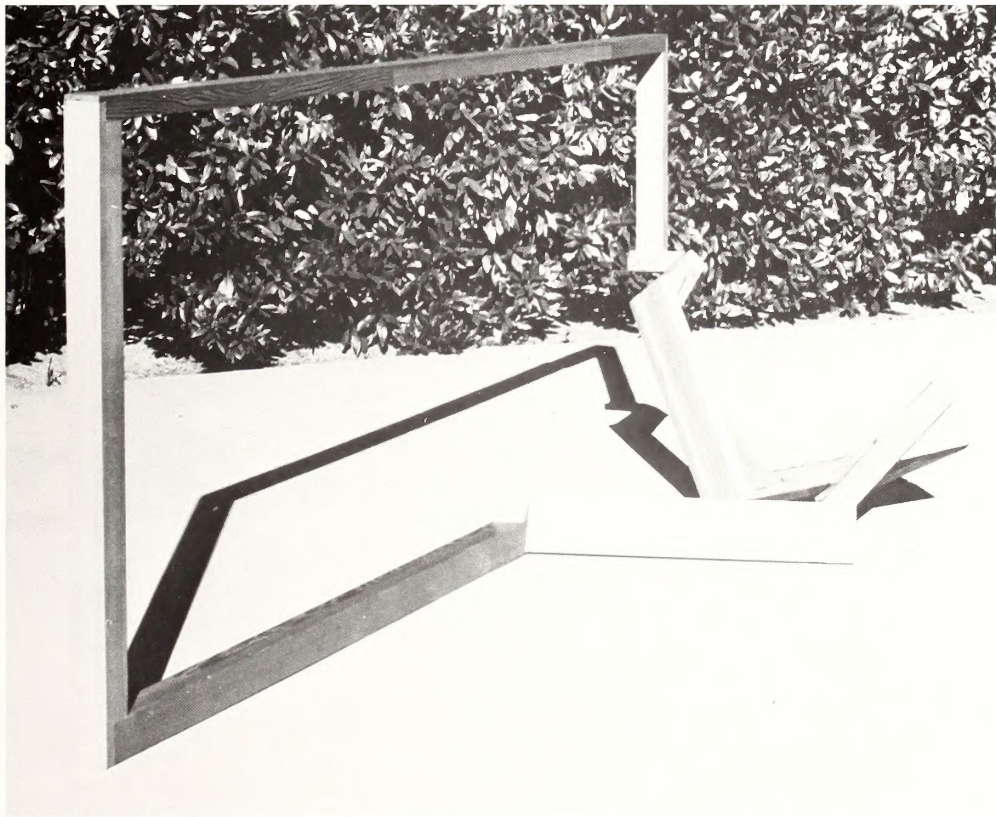


OBJECT 1, 1967, Painted Masonite, 3'5"x4'2"





UNTITLED, 1966, Wood, 2'6"x9'4"



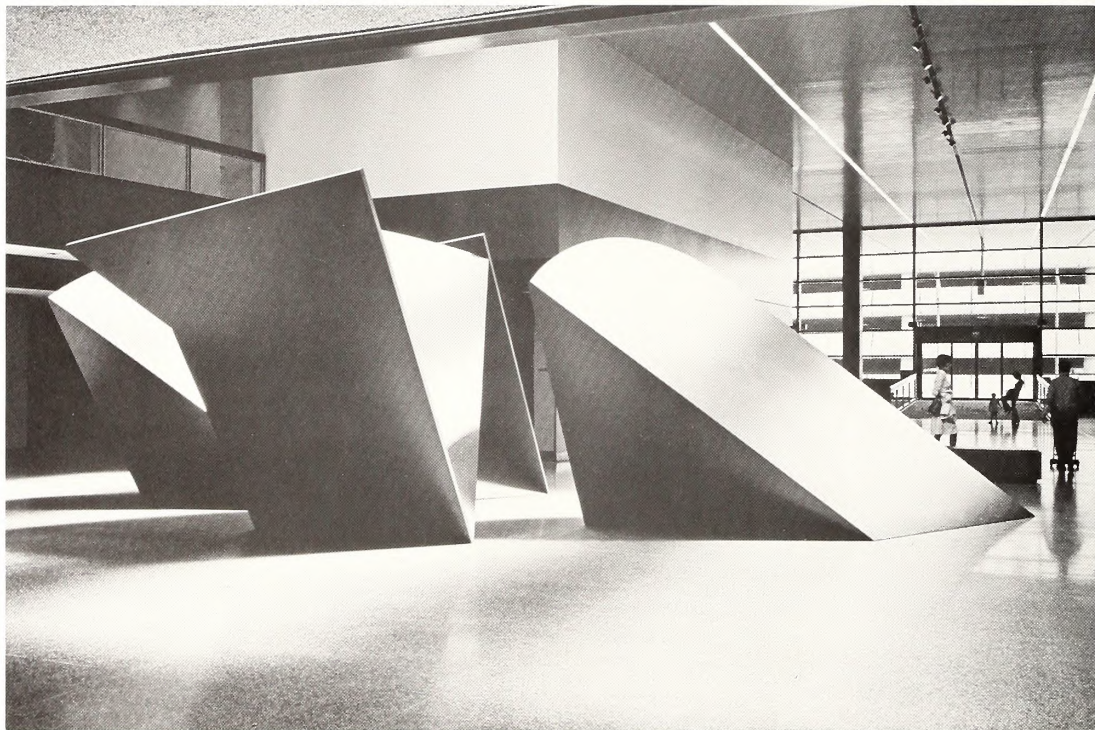
PROLIX 1, 1966-67, Wood, 3'11"x8'6"x3'3"



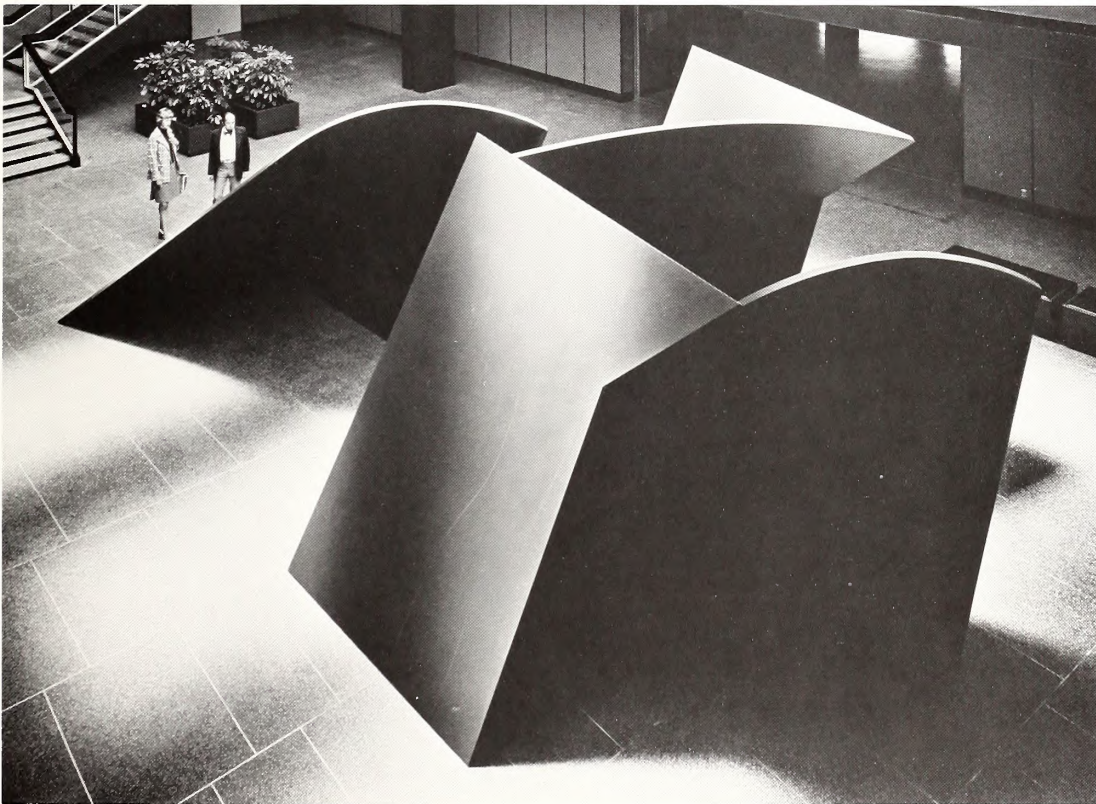
PARKWAY, 1970, Wood Mock-up, 20'x20'x18'



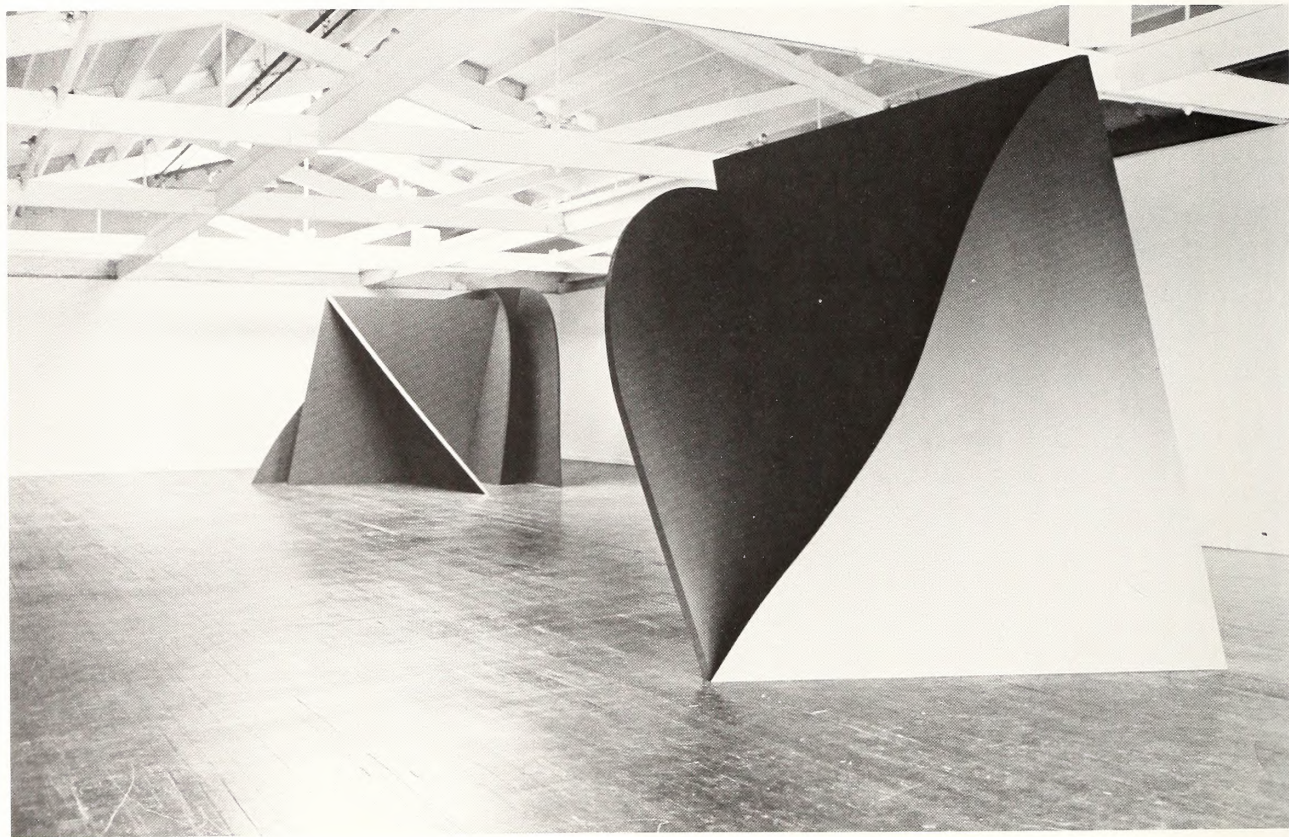
E69, 1969, Wood Mock-up, 8'x18'x8'6", Seattle Center Exhibition, 1973



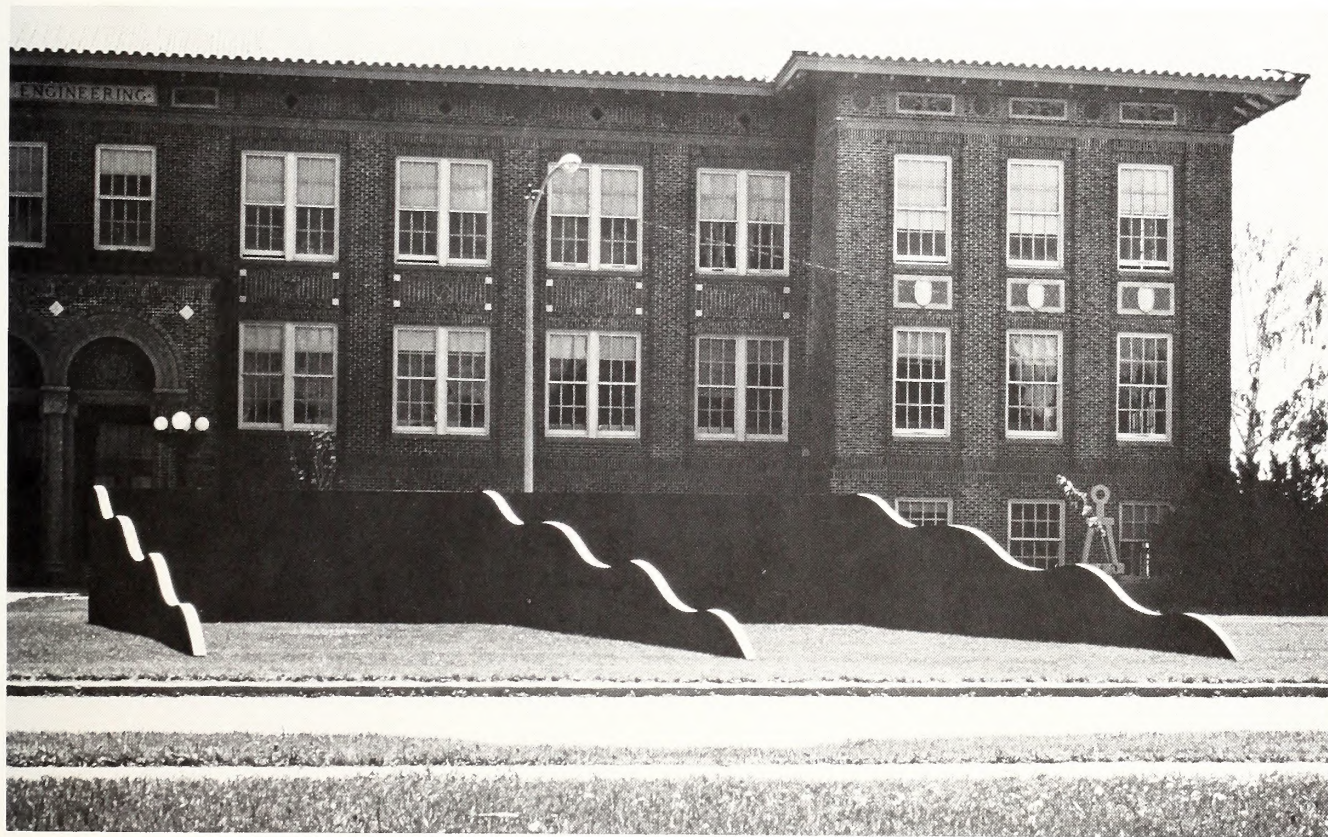
CENTRAL PLAZA SCULPTURE, 1971-73, Painted Aluminum, 11'6"x32'x21',
Seattle-Tacoma International Airport



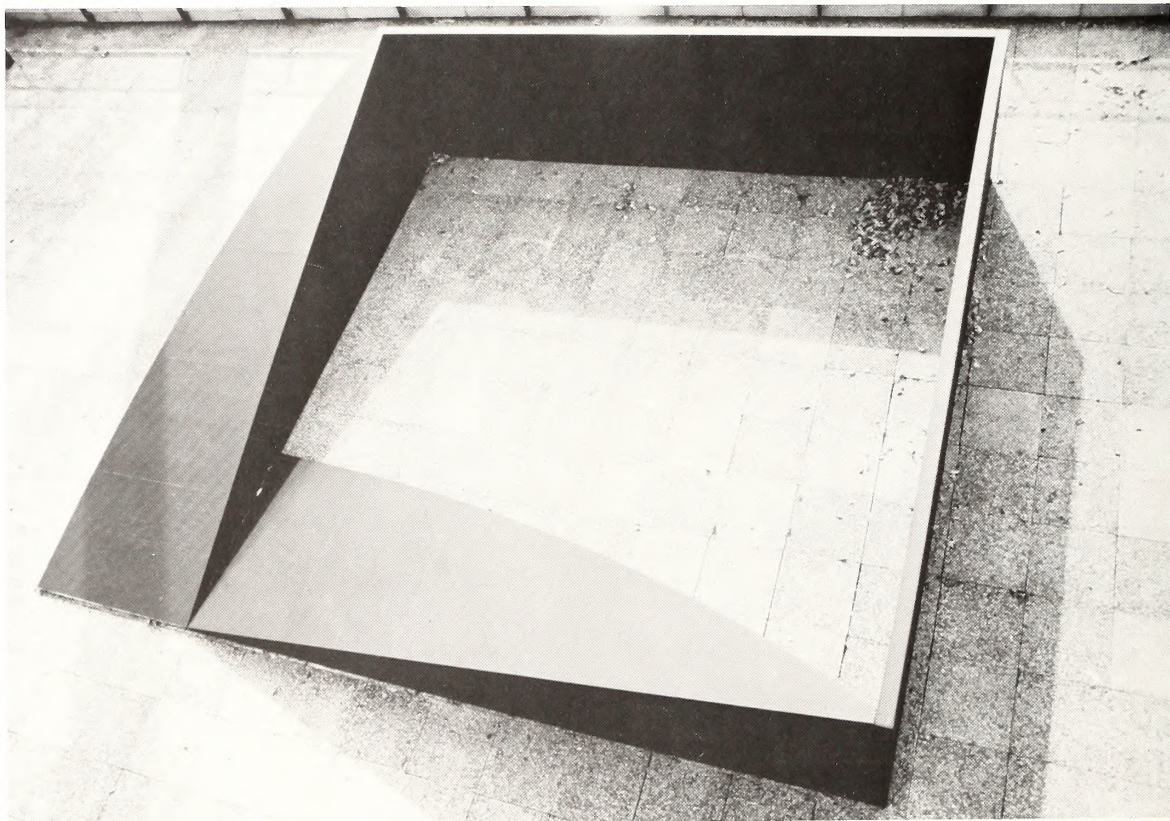
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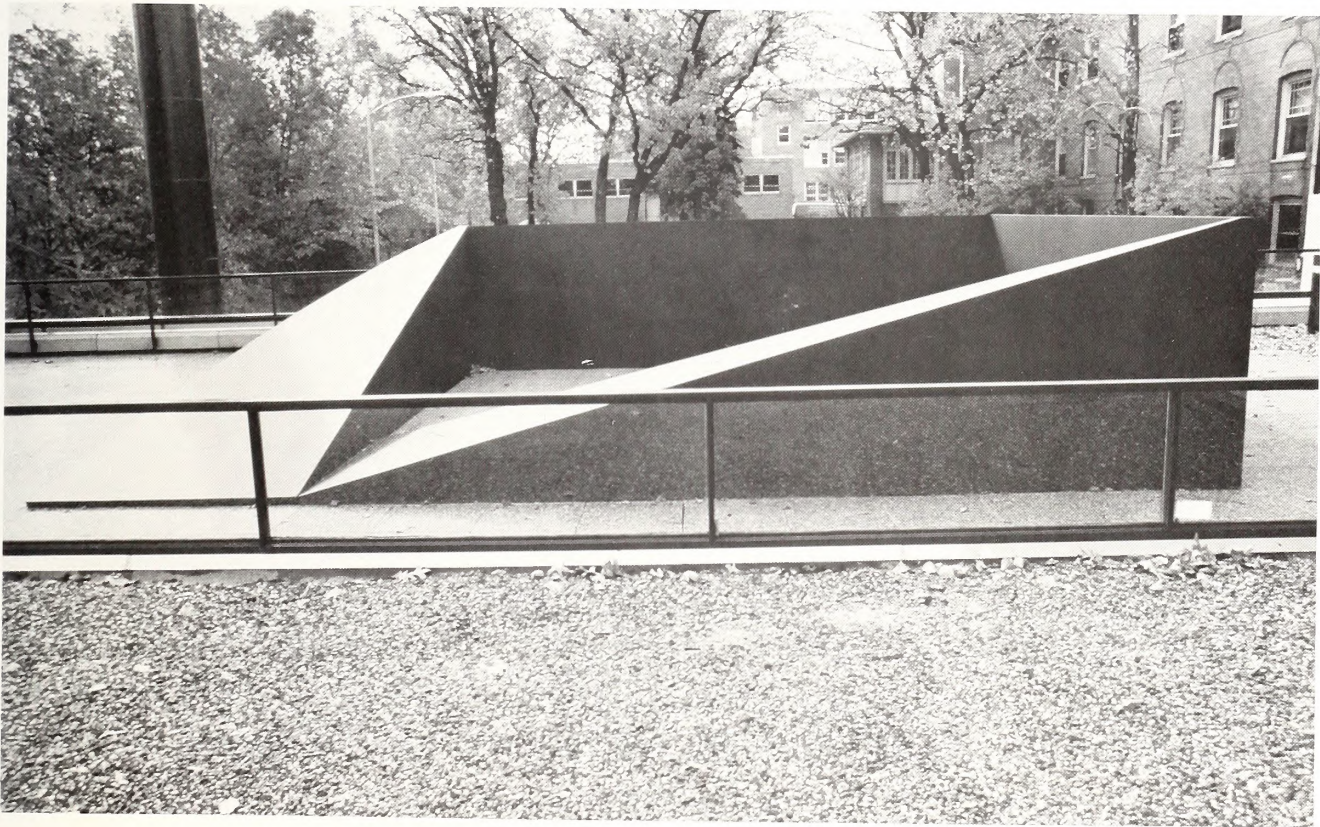
CENTER, 1973, Wood Mock-up, 11'x16'x10', Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon
TRIANGLE, 1973, Wood Mock-up, 11'x12'6"x7', Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon



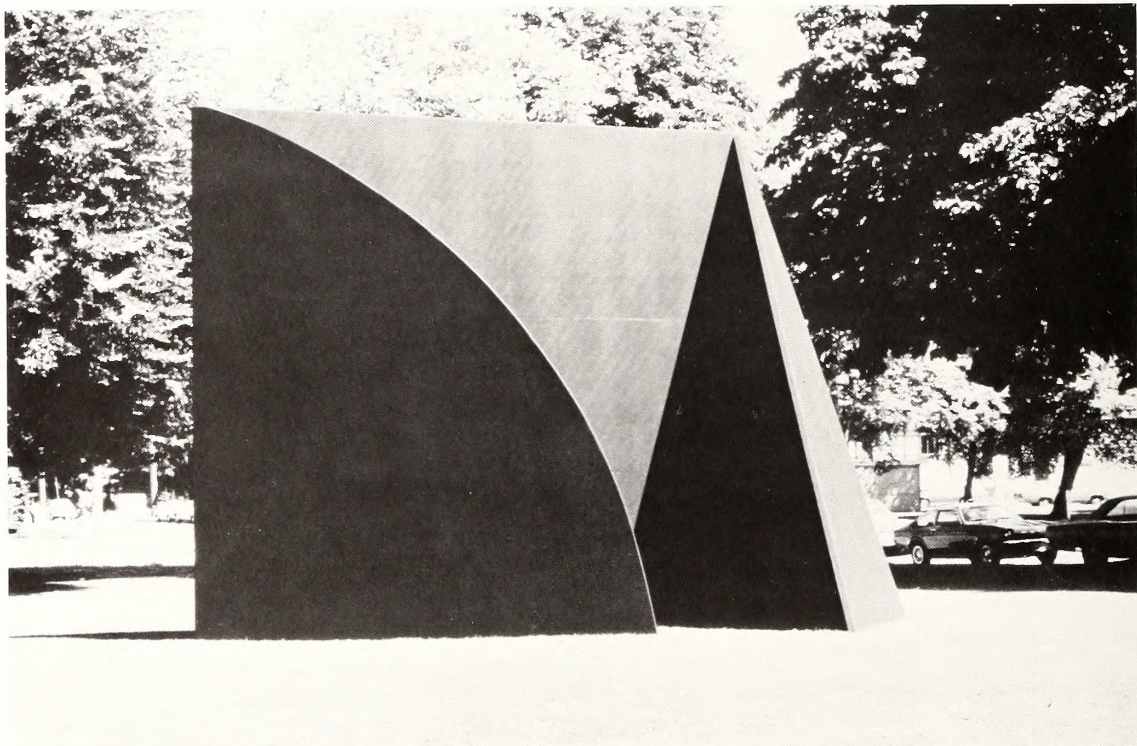
MONTANA E, 1973, Wood Mock-up, 5'6"x32'x28', Montana State University, Bozeman



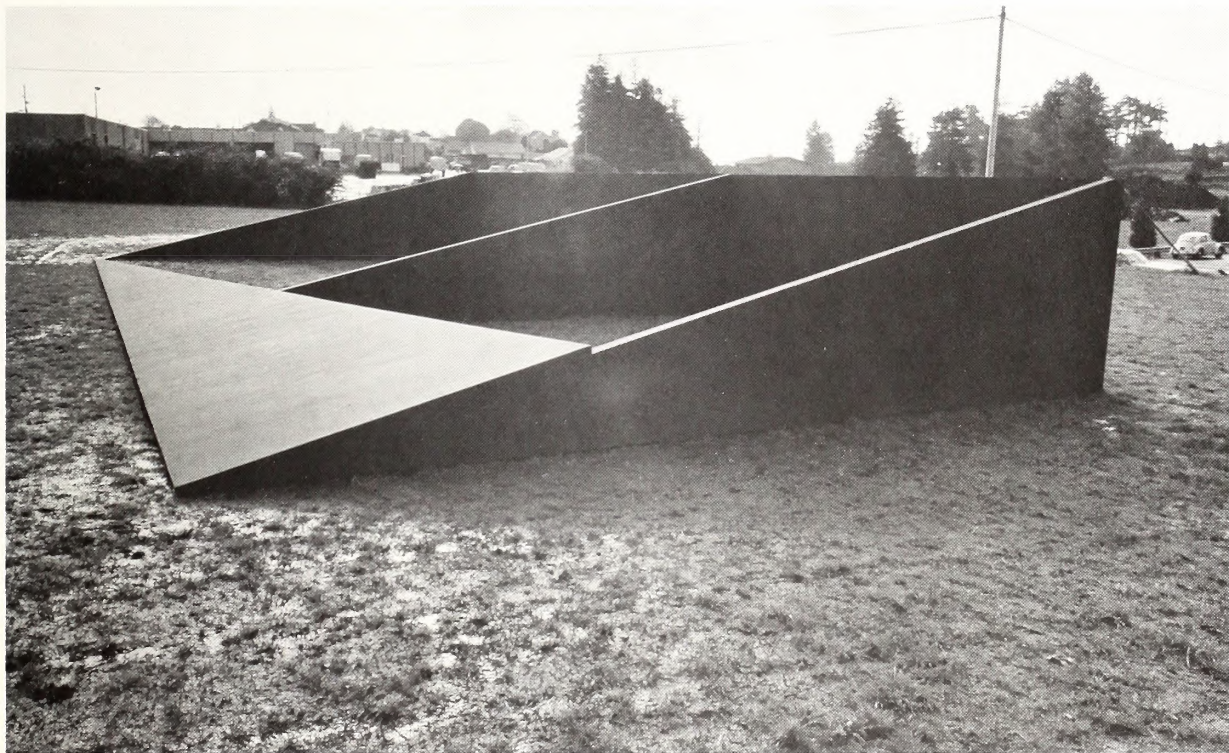
E SQUARE (WIPPICH), 1974, Wood Mock-up, 5'6"x20'x26', St. Cloud State College, Minnesota



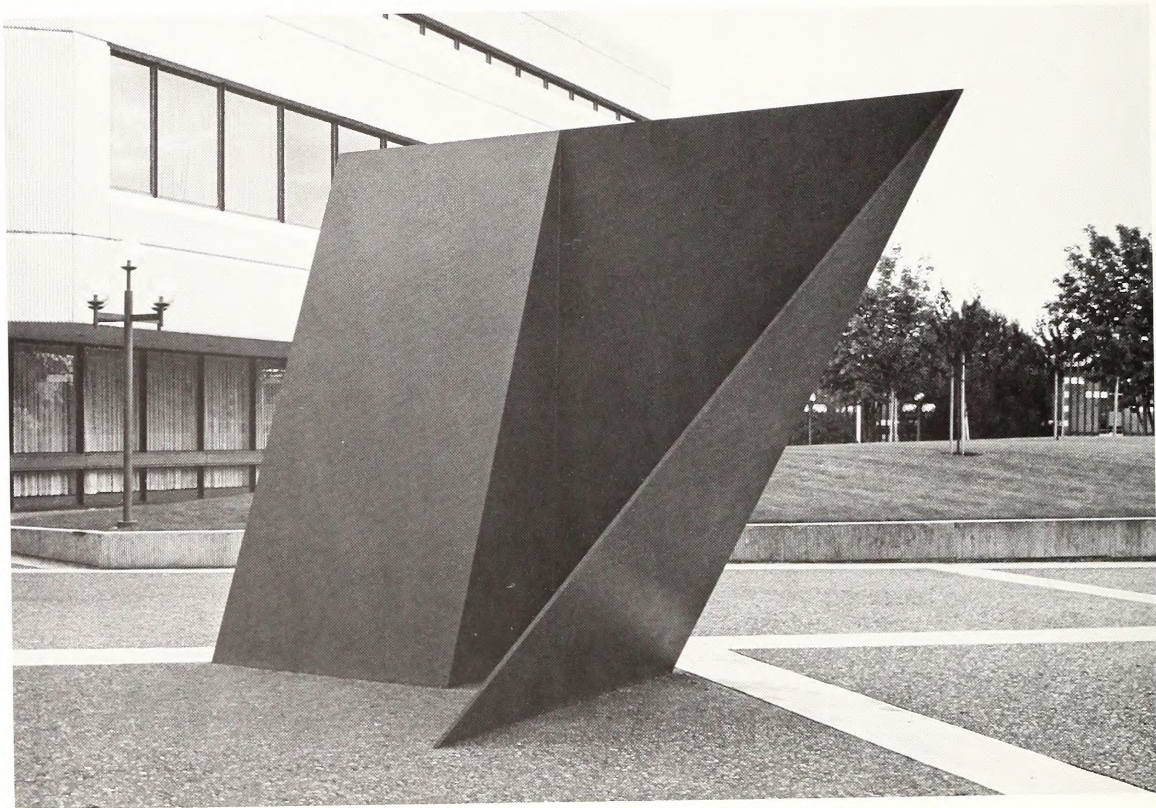
E SQUARE (WIPPICH), 1974, Wood Mock-up, 5'6"x20'x26', St. Cloud State College, Minnesota



BLACK SQUARE, 1974, Wood Mock-up, 13'x18'x10', Seattle Pacific University



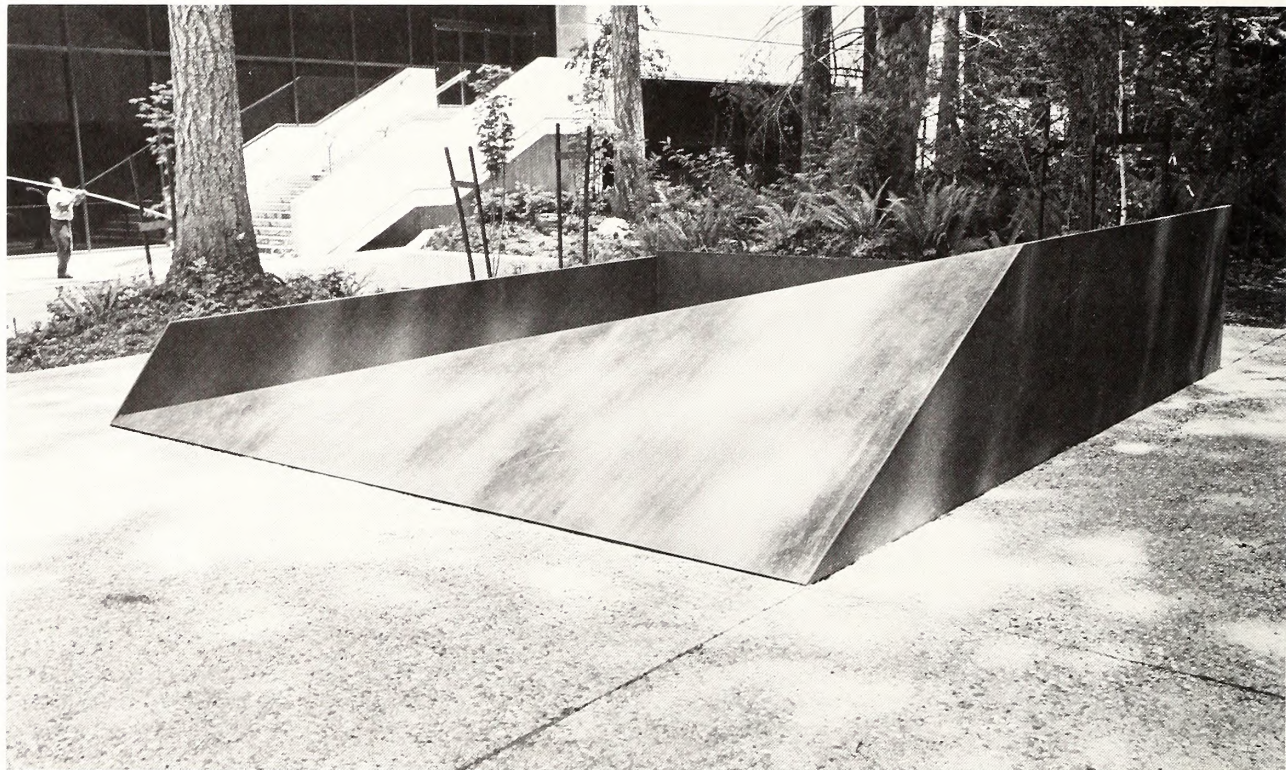
E CLOSED, 1974, Wood Mock-up, 6'x48'x24', Humboldt State University, Arcata, California



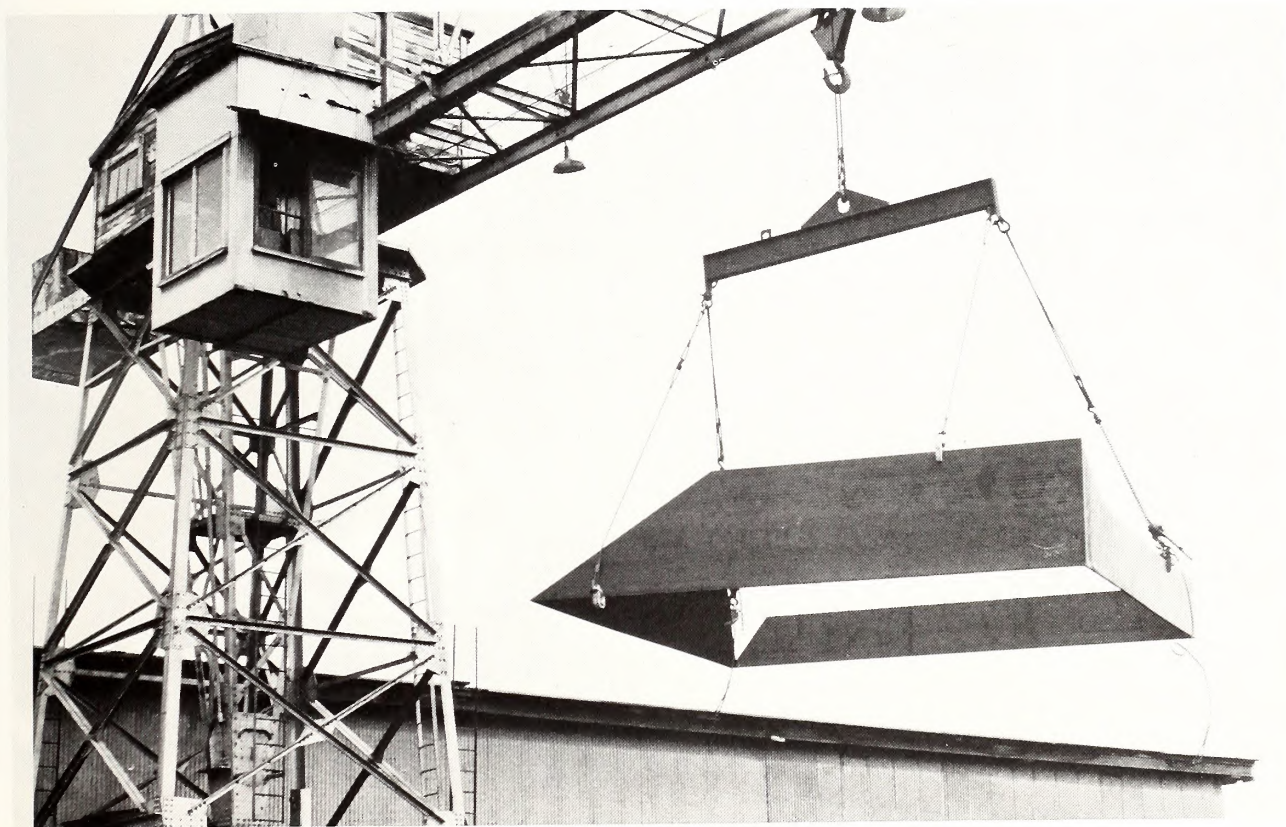
TRAPEZOID E, 1975, Painted Aluminum, 12'x15'x10', Federal Office Building, Eugene, Oregon

TRIMET, 1973, Painted Aluminum, 8'x9'3"x4'6",
Commissioned by the City of Portland, Oregon, 1977

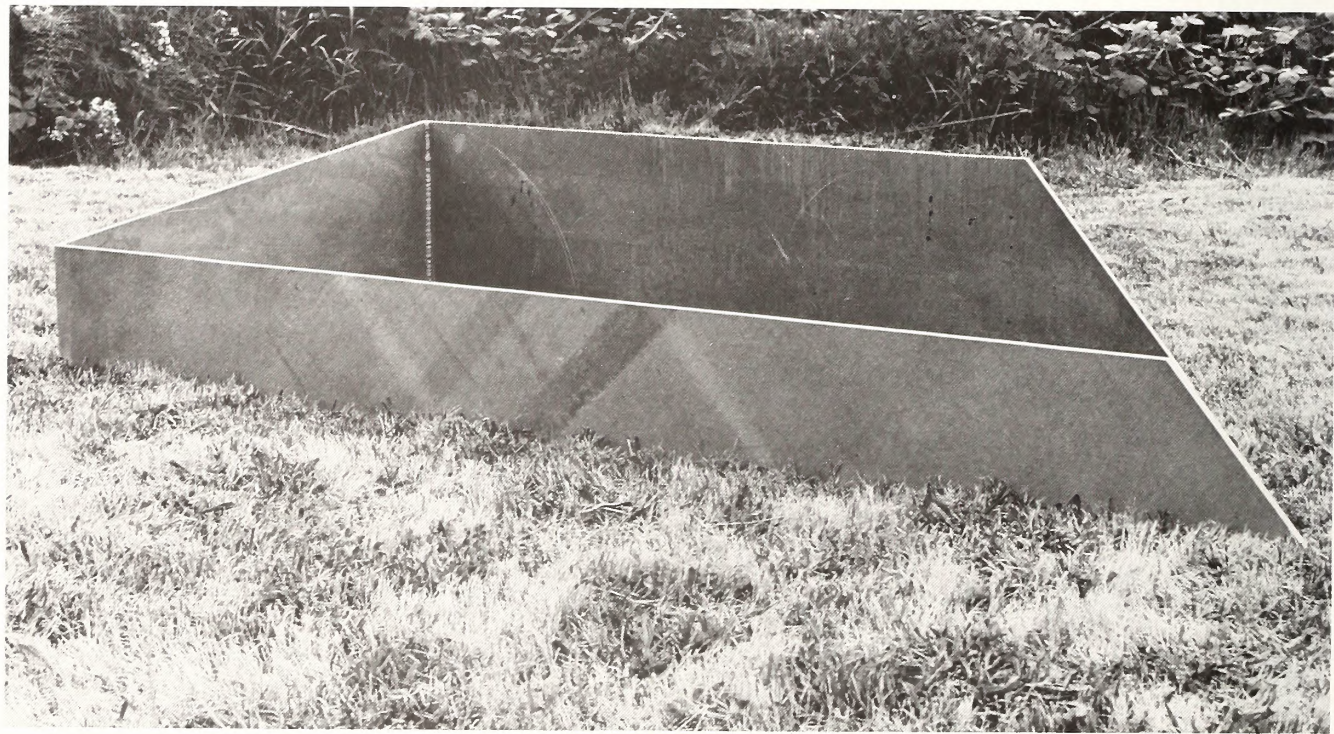




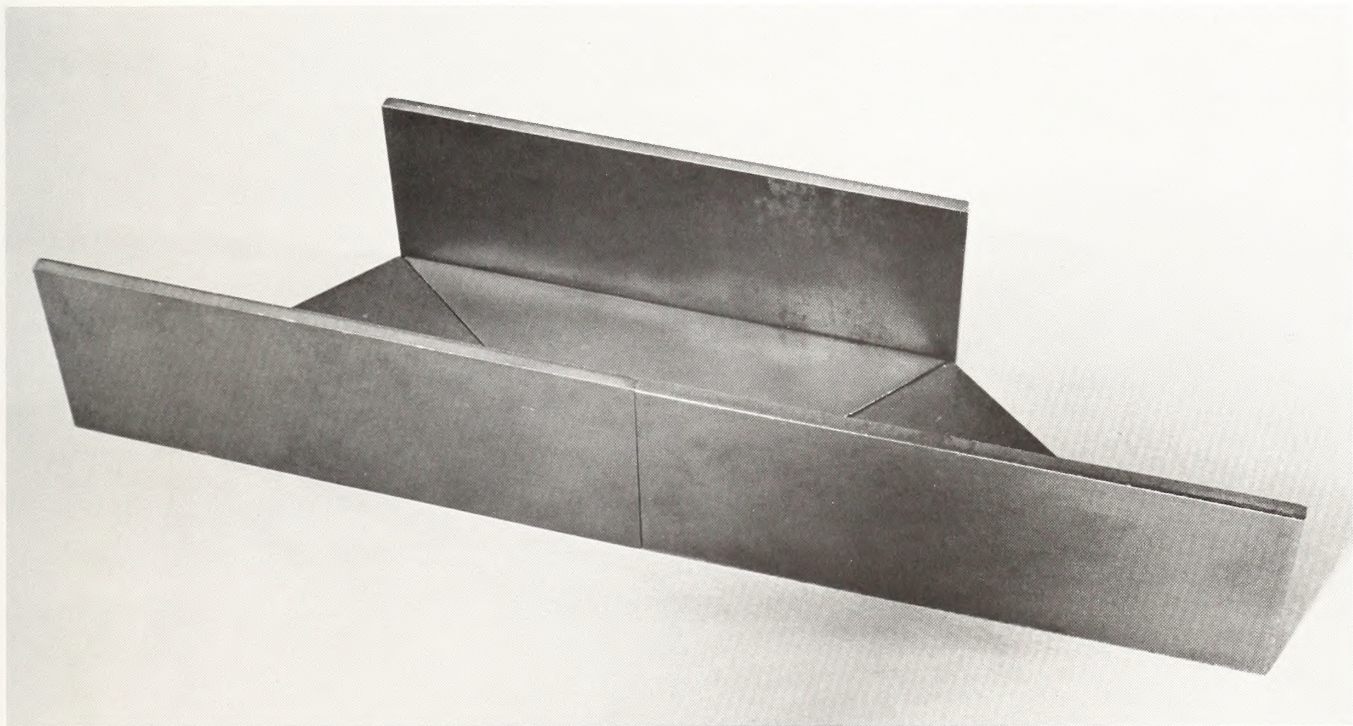
TRAPEZOID SQUARE, 1973, Cor-ten Steel, 3'6"x15'x16', Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington, 1976



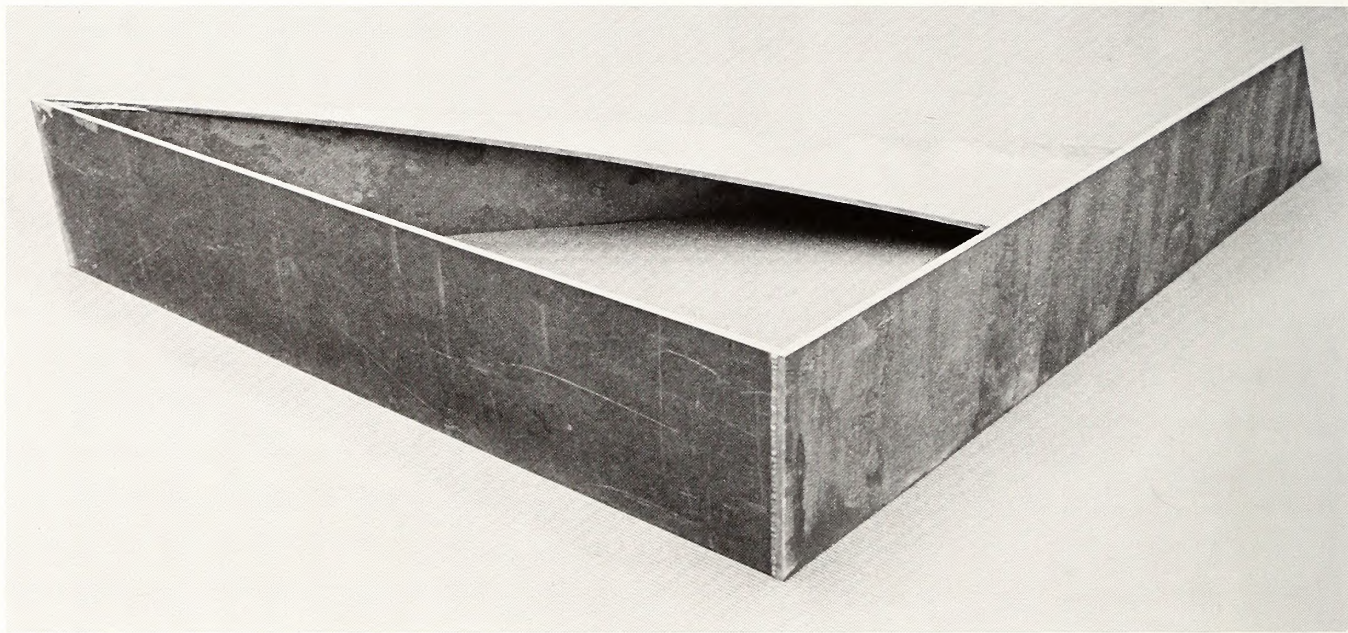
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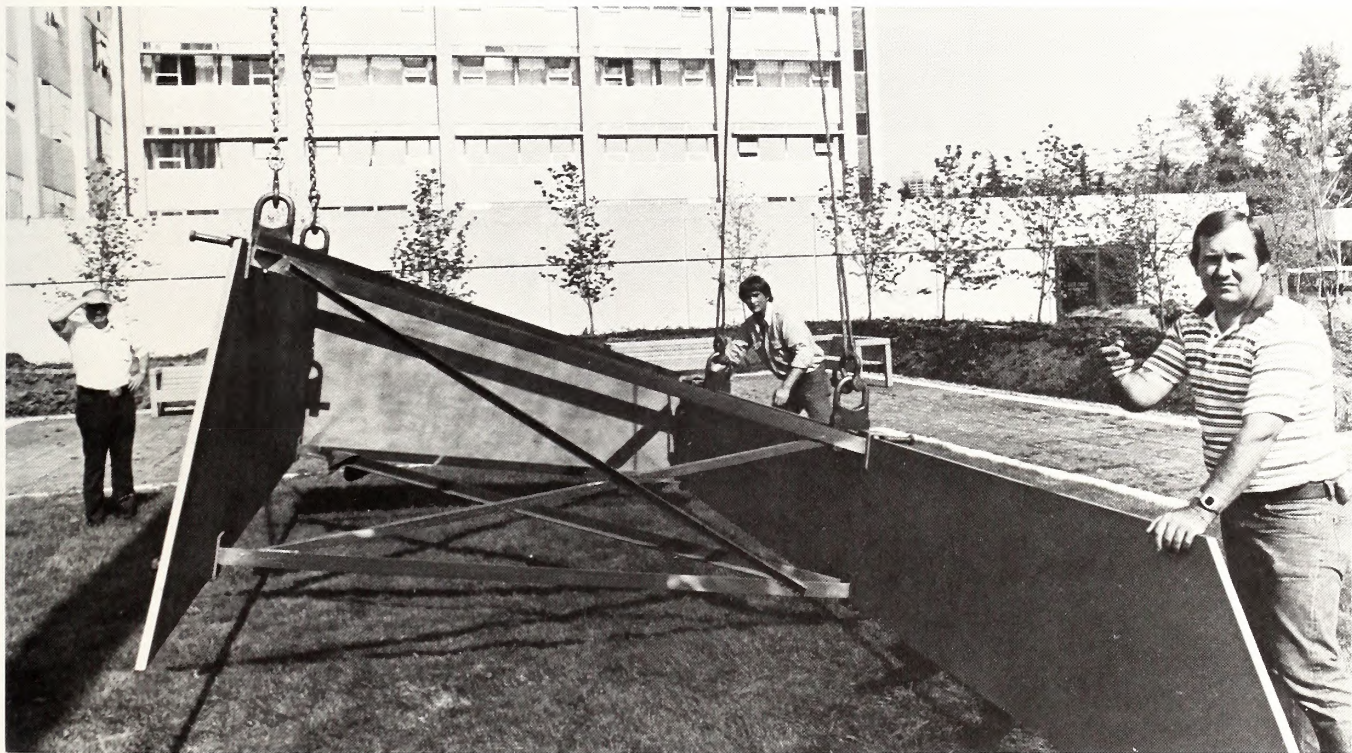
UNTITLED U, 1976, Natural Aluminum, 1'5"x8'1"x3'8"



UNTITLED STEEL, 1977, Varnished Steel, 7"x3'1"x10"



UNTITLED E, 1976, Natural Aluminum, 1'6"x13'x5'4"



CUT, 1977, Cor-ten Steel, 4'x20'x8'6" , University of Washington, Seattle

COVER: Center, 1973, Wood Mock-up, 11'x16'x10', Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon

CATALOGUE DESIGN: Hollis Stauber

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Michael Cohen — pp. 24, 26-30, all other photographs by Robert Maki

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